

CLAIMS:

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1. A method of locating a lost pet, the method comprising the steps of:
 - (a) prompting a pet owner to provide pet information relating to their pet, including an identifier, and contact information for the pet owner;
 - 5 (b) storing the pet information and the contact information in a computer-readable memory accessible by a host computer;
 - (c) providing an information reference device to accompany the pet, the information reference device communicating lost pet information about the pet, including the identifier, for reuniting the pet with the owner;
 - 10 (d) allowing a person who finds the pet to access the host computer via a communications network and to enter the lost pet information provided by the information reference device;
 - (e) comparing in the host computer the lost pet information entered by the person who found the pet to the pet information provided by the pet owner in an attempt to find a match; and
 - 15 (f) if a match is found, providing the person who found the lost pet with the contact information for the pet owner.
 - 20 2. The method as set forth in claim 1, the pet being vaccinated for rabies, the identifier being based upon the rabies vaccination, and the information reference device being a rabies tag worn by the pet.
 - 25 3. The method as set forth in claim 1, further including in step (a) the option of allowing the owner to license the pet with a municipality.
 4. The method as set forth in claim 1, the information reference device being a municipal license tag.
 - 30 5. The method as set forth in claim 1, the information reference device being a microchip implanted in the pet.
 6. The method as set forth in claim 4, the information reference device being a tattoo appearing on the pet's skin.

7. The method as set forth in claim 1, the information reference device being a collar.

8. The method as set forth in claim 1, the communications network 5 including the Internet.

9. The method as set forth in claim 1, the pet information being information selected from the group consisting of a veterinarian's name for the pet, the 10 veterinarian's phone number, a licensing agency, a number from a rabies tag for the pet, a year that the pet was vaccinated, an indication of a pet type for the pet, an indication of a breed of the pet, a color of the pet, a date the pet was found, and a location where the pet was found.

10. The method as set forth in claim 1, the contact information being 15 information selected from the group consisting of the pet owner's name, the pet owner's address, the pet owner's telephone number, a veterinarian for the pet, the veterinarian's address, and the veterinarian's phone number.

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11. A computer program stored on a computer-readable memory device for operating a computer to aid in locating lost pets, the computer program comprising:

5 a code segment for receiving from a pet owner pet information, including an identifier, relating to a pet and contact information for the pet owner;

10 a code segment for storing the pet information and the contact information in computer-readable memory accessible by a host computer;

15 a code segment for permitting a person who finds the pet to access the host computer via a communications network and to enter lost pet information relating to the lost pet;

20 a code segment for comparing the lost pet information entered by the person who found the pet to the pet information provided by the pet owner in an attempt to find a match; and

25 a code segment for providing the person who found the lost pet with the contact information for the owner of the lost pet if a match is found.

15 12. The computer program as set forth in claim 10, further including a code segment for allowing the owner to license the pet with a municipality.

20 13. The computer program as set forth in claim 10, the pet being vaccinated for rabies and the identifier being related to the rabies vaccination.

25 14. The computer program as set forth in claim 10, the pet information being information selected from the group consisting of a veterinarian's name for the pet, the veterinarian's phone number, a licensing agency, a number from a rabies tag for the pet, a year that the pet was vaccinated, an indication of a pet type for the pet, an indication of a breed of the pet, a color of the pet, a date the pet was found, and a location where the pet was found.

30 15. The computer program as set forth in claim 10, the contact information being information selected from the group consisting of the pet owner's name, the pet owner's address, the pet owner's telephone number, a veterinarian for the pet, the veterinarian's address, and the veterinarian's phone number.

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16. A system to aid in locating lost pets, the system comprising:
a host computer accessible via a communications network and programmed to:
receive from a pet owner pet information, including an identifier, relating
to a pet and contact information for the pet owner;
5 store the pet information and the contact information in computer-
readable memory accessible by a host computer;
permit a person who finds a pet to access the host computer via a
communications network and to enter lost pet information relating
to the lost pet;
10 compare the lost pet information entered by the person who found the pet
to the pet information provided by the pet owner in an attempt to
find a match;
provide the person who found the lost pet with the contact information for
the owner of the lost pet if a match is found; and
15 an information reference device to accompany the pet and communicate the
identifier.

17. The system as set forth in claim 15, the host computer being further
programmed to allow the owner to license the pet with a municipality.

18. The system as set forth in claim 15, the pet being vaccinated for
rabies, the identifier being related to the rabies vaccination, and the information
reference device being a rabies tag.

19. The system as set forth in claim 15, the information reference device
being a license tag.

20. The system as set forth in claim 15, the information reference device
being a microchip.

21. The system as set forth in claim 15, the information reference device
being a tattoo.

22. The system as set forth in claim 15, the information reference device being a collar.

23. The system as set forth in claim 15, the pet information being
5 information selected from the group consisting of a veterinarian's name for the pet, the veterinarian's phone number, a licensing agency, a number from a rabies tag for the pet, a year that the pet was vaccinated, an indication of a pet type for the pet, an indication of a breed of the pet, a color of the pet, a date the pet was found, and a location where the pet was found.

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24. The system as set forth in claim 15, the contact information being information selected from the group consisting of the pet owner's name, the pet owner's address, the pet owner's telephone number, a veterinarian for the pet, the veterinarian's address, and the veterinarian's phone number.

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25. The system as set forth in claim 15, the information reference device further communicating an Internet address whereat the person finding the pet may access the host computer in an attempt to reunite the pet with its owner.

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